SOME PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE KUṢĀṆAS

RESEARCH LECTURES, NEW SERIES No. 3

General Editor
Dr. P. B. DESAI

SOME PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE KUṢĀṆAS

Dr. D. C. SIRCAR, M.A., Ph.D.
Carmichael Professor and Head of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, and Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University.

KANNADA RESEARCH INSTITUTE
KARNATAK UNIVERSITY, DHARWAR-3

1971

Published by
The Director,
Kannada Research Institute,
Karnatak University,
Dharwar-3

Price : Rs. 4

Foreign : $ 1

Printed by
P. D. Pai,
Prakash Printing House,
Dharwar-1

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FOREWORD

The present book is the third in our new series of Research Lectures. It embodies the three lectures delivered in our Department in January 1969 by Dr. D. C. Sircar, Carmichael Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture and Director, Centre of Advanced Study, Calcutta University. I am grateful to this scholar who kindly accepted my invitation to deliver these lectures and gave me an opportunity to publish them. These lectures deal with some problems in the history of the Kuṣāṇas who occupy an important place in the ancient history of India. As foreigners they came and settled in the north-western part of this country in the early century of the Christian era. Then, they extended their sway over large areas of North India and contributed to the growth of Indian culture.

Before delivering these lectures, Dr. Sircar had the added advantage of discussing some of the problems in an international seminar on Kuṣāṇa history organised in Dushambe in Tajikistan (USSR) in October 1968. I am glad that the results of these discussions have also been incorporated in these lectures. Thus I hope the scholars interested in the subject will find them very useful.

My colleagues in the Department, Dr. Shrinivas Ritti and Dr. B. R. Gopal have shouldered the burden of seeing this work through the press. Dr. A. Sundara who has recently joined this Department as Lecturer, has also helped in correcting the proofs. My Research Assissant Dr. (Miss) Leela Shantakumari has prepared the Index. The Artist Sri. R. S. Desai has prepared the cover design and the map. I thank them all.

The Pai brothers of the Prakash Printing House, Dharwar deserve our thanks for their neat job in a limited time.

Dspartment of Ancient Indian History
and Culture and Kannada Research Institute,
Karnatak University, Dharwar.

P. B. Desai
Professor and Director

PREFACE

I express my thankfulness to the authorities of the Karnatak University for their kindness in inviting me to deliver a course of three lectures. I am particularly grateful to my old friend and colleague (in the Epigraphical Branch of the Archaeological Survey of India at Ootacamund), Dr. P. B. Desai, Professor and Head of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, and Director of the Kannada Research Institute, who really extended the invitation to me on a few earlier occasions, and am glad that I have been able to accept the offer this time. I am also happy to note that Dr. S. H. Ritti and Dr. B. R. Gopal, who are now Readers in Prof. Desai's Department, but were once my valued Assistants when I was Government Epigraphist for India, exhibited great eagerness to bring me once to Dharwar.

On receipt of Prof. Desai's invitation in November 1968, I agreed to deliver three lectures on 'Some Problems Concerning the Kuṣāṇas'. This was because I had the privilege of attending the International Conference on Kuṣāṇa history and culture held at Dushanbe in Tajikistan (USSR) from the 27th September to the 5th October 1968 and raised a number of questions there. Although the standard of discussion at the conference was not as high as I expected it to be (because few participants exhibited their inclination or ability to participate), I was eager, on my return to India, to publish my own views on the problems. Thus it is some of those topics that I selected as the subject of my lectures.

When we were listening to some of the papers presented at the Dushanbe Conference by a number of archaeologists, it appeared to us that the authors' suppositions were more or less as follows:—(1) that all the Kuṣāṇa kings were staunch followers of the Buddhist faith and that all of them were builders of innumerable Buddhist monasteries throughout their dominions; (2) that the empire of the Kuṣāṇas was characterised by a distinct culture for which the monarchs alone were responsible; and (3) that the southern portions of the Central Asian Republics of the USSR lying to the north of the Oxus river were integral parts of the dominions of all the Kuṣāṇa emperors. In our opinion, none of these views can be regarded as proved historical facts, so that they are likely to remain merely unproved guesses until further evidence is forthcoming on the points. It appears to us:—(1) that only some of the Kuṣāṇa emperors had Buddhist leanings and that most of the monasteries built during their reigns were due to private enterprise; (2) that there was nothing like a uniform culture in the Kuṣāṇa empire, different regions in it (e. g. Gandhāra and Mathurā) enjoying quite different cultures and that the so-called Kuṣāṇa culture appears to be largely borrowed from the Scythians, Parthians, Greeks, Iranians, Indians and Chinese; and (3) that there is no evidence of Kuṣāṇa rule in the Trans-Oxus region during the reigns of Kaṇiṣka I and his immediate successors including Vāsudeva I.

The problems referred to above require a thorough and careful examination. Closely allied to them is the question of the eastern boundary of the Kuṣāṇa empire which was the subject of the paper presented by us at the Dushanbe Conference. In this connection, reference should also be made to another interesting question raised at the Conference by a participant who appeared to suppose that, during the Kuṣāṇa age, Takṣaśilā was still a popular seat of learning, to which students of various parts of India are known to have flocked in an earlier age. It appears to us, however, that the popularity of Takṣaśilā must have

suffered in the period in question, because, as a result of the foreign occupation, the whole area watered by the Indus and its five eastern tributaries was particularly regarded by the people of the other parts of the subcontinent as an unholy land inhabited by godless people and unfit for being visited by righteous men.

Some of these problems I have discussed in my three lectures.

Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, and Centre of Advanced Study, Calcutta University

D. C. Sircar
Professor and Director

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Probable extent of the Kuṣāṇa Kingdom

I

RELIGIOUS POLICY OF THE KUSANAS

Kujula Kadphises (Kadphises I), the first king of the Kuṣāṇa house, issued certain copper coins, the obverse of which exhibits the diademed bust of the Greek king Hermaios with the Greek legends—*Basileos Sterossy Ermaiou*, "[Coin] of King Hermaios, the Saviour", on the earlier issues, and *Kozoulou Kadphizou Korsolou*, "[Coin] of Kujula Kadphises, the Kuṣāṇa", on the issues which appear to be later than the former. The reverse of these coins has the Prakrit legend written in Kharoṣṭhī characters—*Kujula-Kasasa Kuṣana-yavugasa dhrama-ṭhidasa*, "[Coin] of the Kuṣāṇa Prince Kujula Kadphises who is Steadfast in the Faith".[1]

Another type of the same king's copper coins has on the obverse, the king's diademed head (supposed to be imitated from the coins of the Roman emperor Augustus) and the Greek legend—*Khoransu Zaoou Kozola-Kadaphes*, "[Coin] of Kujula Kadphises, the Kuṣāṇa Prince", the Prakrit-Kharoṣṭhī legend on the reverse being— *Kuyula-Kaphasa Sacadhrama-ṭhitasa Khuṣanasa Yaüasa*, ["Coin] of the Kuṣāṇa Prince Kujula Kadphises who is Steadfast in the True Faith".[2]

The epithets *Dharma-ṭhida (Dharma-sthita)* and *Saca-dhrama-ṭhita (Satya-dharma-sthita)* have been generally regarded by numismatists to indicate the Kuṣāṇa king's adherence to the Buddhist faith. Another type of copper coins on which the legends cannot be read, but the obverse symbol of which is the Buddha seated in conventional attitude with an uncertain object in

1 Whitehead, *Catalogue of Coins in the Punjab Museum, Lahore*, Vol. I, pp. 178-79.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 181.

right hand, has been attributed to the same king.[3] It is thus possible to think that Kadphises I was a Buddhist. It may be noted, however, that an early inscription is known to apply the epithet *satya-dharma-sthita* to a devotee of the god Sarva or Śiva.[4]

Kujula's son and successor Vima Kadphises (Kadphises II) issued gold coins, the reverse side of which generally represented the god Śiva or the god's emblem, the trident-battle-axe. Śiva is often standing, wearing necklace, with long trident in right hand and leaning against the bull. Sometimes, the god has long trident-battle-axe in his right hand and the gourd and tiger-skin in left hand. The reverse legend in Prakrit and Kharoṣṭhī is—*Maharajasa rajadirajasa sarvaloga-iśvarasa Mahiśvarasa Vima-Kaṭphisasa tradarasa*, "[Coin] of Vima Kadphises, the King, the Supreme King of Kings, the Saviour who is a Māheśvara (devotee of Maheśvara or Śiva) and the lord of the whole

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3 *Ibid.*, pp. 181-82 Some scholars think that the figure of the Buddha occurs on the coins (cf. Smith's *Catalogue*, Plate VIII, 4) of the Śaka king Maues (c. 20 B. C.-25 A. D.) and on certain early Ujjayinī issues. Others are doubtful about this. See J. N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, 2nd ed., p. 112.

4 A Mathura inscription refers to a person as *satyadha[r*]masthitasya Nanava(yā)t = Sarva-śca(Ca)ṇḍavir-ātisṛṣṭa-rājyasya* (cf Lüders, *Mathura Inscriptions*, p. 138). The passage reminds us of *Maheśvara-Mahāsen-ātisṛṣṭa-rājya-vibhava* and of *Maheśvara-Mahāsenātisṛṣṭa-rājya* of other inscriptions (*Ep. Ind*., Vol. XXVIII, p. 13, note 3). The three passages may suggest either that the gods Sarva (Śiva) and Caṇḍavīra in the first case and Maheśvara (Śiva) and Mahāsena (Skanda-Kārttikeya) in the second and third bestowed kingdoms to their devotees or that, of the three persons, the first dedicated his kingdom to the gods Sarva and Caṇḍavīra and the second and third, their dominions to the gods Maheśvara and Mahāsena; cf. *The Age of Imperial Unity*, ed. Majumdar, p. 161, notes 1 and 4; Sircar, *Studies in Indian Coins*, pp. 212 ff.; *Ep. Ind*., Vol. XXX, p. 19. In either case, especially if the second interpretation of the passages is accepted, the epithet *Satya-dharma-sthita* in the first passage as well as on the coins of Kadphises I loses its Buddhistic significance.

world."[5] There is little doubt that Kadphises II was a devotee of the god, Śiva.

On the reverse of the coins of Kaṇiṣka I, we have the representations of — (1) the fire-god Athsho (Persian *Atash*), (2) the Moon-god Mao, (3) the Sun-god Miiro, Miuro (or Mithra) or Mioro (i. e. Neo-Sanskrit *Mihira*), (4) the mother-goddess Nana, Nanaia or Nanashao, (5) the war-god Orlagno (Persian *Bahram*), (6) the fire-god Pharro (Persian *Farr*), (7) the Sun-god Helios, (8) the wind-god Oado (Vado = Sanskrit *Vāta*), (9) Boddo (Buddha), (10) Mozdooano (Ahura Mazda), (11) the Greek fire-god Hephasistos, (12) Salene, (13) Manaobago, (14) Lrooaspo, etc.[6] This seems to suggest that the king had a catholic religious policy and represented himself to his subjects, belonging to different religious communities all over his vast empire, as full of respect towards the deities worshipped by them. It will be seen that the Buddha was only one of the many divinities represented on the coins and named in the legends, so that their issuer could hardly have been a staunch Buddhist, though he appears to have had Buddhistic leanings. By this time, the development of the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism had already started and the sage Gautama the Buddha had already become, in practice, a god ready to hear the prayers of the faithful.[7]

An inscription[8] from Surkh Kotal near Baglan on the Kunduz river in Northern Afghanistan speaks of the repairs to a temple called *Kaneshko Oanindo Bago laggo* (the sanctuary of the Victorious Kaṇiṣka), in the year 31 of the Kaṇiṣka era. This was a Fire temple of the Iranian type and not a Buddhist religious establishment.[9] Kaṇiṣka I, whose name is apparently

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 183 ff.

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 186 ff.; *Sel. Ins.*, 1965 ed., p. 147, note 6.

7 Smith, *E. Hist. Ind.*, 1924 ed., p. 282.

8 *BSOAS*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 47 ff.; cf. *Journ. As.*, 1958, pp. 345 ff.

9 See *Journ. As.*, 1958, pp. 368 ff

associated with the temple, thus does not appear to have been a staunch Buddhist.

According to Buddhist tradition, king Kaṇiṣka was a devout Buddhist and a great patron of Buddhism, who convened the Fourth Buddhist Council probably in Kashmir.[10] "The stories told about Kaṇiṣka's conversion and his subsequent zeal for Buddhism have so much resemblance to the Aśoka legends that it is difficult to decide how far they are traditions of actual fact and how far merely echoes of older traditions."[11] It is also not easy to determine whether the Buddhist Kaṇiṣka was the first king of that name or one of his successors bearing the same name.

According to Hiuen-tsang, the Buddhist king Kaṇiṣka of Gandhāra built at the capital of the country, called Puruṣapura (Peshāwar), a magnificent *stūpa* 400 feet high with a super-structure of gilt-copper discs, its base being in five stages and 150 feet in height.[12] Kaṇiṣka also built a *vihāra* near the *stūpa*.[13] In the 11th century, Al-Bīrūnī speaks of the Kanik-caitya (Kaṇiṣka-caitya) at Purushāvar (Peshāwar).[14] According to the Ghoshravan inscription,[15] Vīradeva, son of the Brāhmaṇa Indragupta of Nagarahāra (Jalālābād), had studied at the feet of *Ācārya* Sarvajñaśānti at the Kaṇiṣka-mahāvihāra, no doubt at Puruṣapura, before he came to the Yaśovamapura-vihāra (at Ghoshravan near Biharsharif in the Patna District, Bihar) and was honoured by king Devapāla (c. 810-50 A. D.). In any case, the founder of the Kaṇiṣka *stūpa* and monastery at Peshāwar may have been a devout Buddhist though it is uncertain whether he

10 Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 283 ff.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 280.

12 Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, Vol. I, pp. 203 ff.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 208.

14 Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, Vol. II, p. 11.

15 Maitreya, *Gauḍalekhamālā*, pp. 46 ff.

has to be identified with Kaṇiṣka I or one of his namesakes among his successors.

The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* speaks of the three Turuṣka kings of Kashmir named Huṣka, Juṣka and Kaṇiṣka (usually identified with Huviṣka, Vāsiṣka or Vajeska, and Kaṇiṣka II of the Ara inscription of the Kaṇiṣka year 41)[16] and represents them as having Buddhist leanings.[17] "Then there was, in this land, three kings called Huṣka, Juṣka and Kaṇiṣka, who built three towns named after them (i. e. Huṣkapura, Juṣkapura and Kaṇiṣkapura). That wise king Juṣka, who built Juṣkapura with its *vihāra* was also the founder of Jayasvāmipura (apparently named after the god Jayasvāmin, a form of Viṣṇu).[18] These kings who were given to acts of piety, though descended from the Turuṣka race, built at Śuṣkaletra[19] and other places *maṭhas*, *caityas* and similar structures. During the powerful reign of these kings, the land of Kashmir was, to a great extent, in the possession of the

16 Kalhaṇa, the author of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, is believed to represent Huṣka, Juṣka and Kaṇiṣka as having ruled simultaneously (Stein, *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī*, Vol. I, Intro., p. 76). The rule of Kaṇiṣka II (year 41) falls within Huviṣka's reign period (years 28-60), while the Sanchi inscription of Vāsiṣka (years 24-28), dated year 28 *Hemanta* I *Divasa* 5 (i. e. Mārgaśirṣa-badi 5) is later than the Mathura inscription of Huviṣka, dated 28, first day of the month of Gurpiya (Bhādrapada-Āśvina) since the year seems to have started after the Phālguna fullmoon (i. e. with *Pūrṇimānta* Caitra). See *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, 1965 ed., pp. 150 ff. (cf. p. 152, note 8).

17 I. 168 ff.

18 III. 350; V. 449; cf. III. 453-54. Stein, in his translation of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, regards Jayasvāmin correctly as Viṣṇu at one place (p. 102) but as the Sun-god elsewhere (p. 232), because, in the latter case, the god is called Jayasvāmivirocana. The name Virocana, however, is also applied to Viṣṇu according to Monier-Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary.

19 Śuṣkaletra (modern Haklitre in the Doonsoo Pargana) and Vitastātra (modern Vithvutur near Vernag, the source of the Vitastā) were famous for the numerous Buddhist monasteries built by Aśoka (*Rājataraṅgiṇī*, I. 102). The Dharmāraṇyavihāra at the latter place (*ibid*, I. 103) is supposed to have been pre-Aśokan.

Bauddhas who, by practising the law of religious mendicancy *(pravrajyā)*, had acquired great renown. At that time, one hundred and fifty years had passed in this terrestrial world since the blessed Śākyasiṁha (the Buddha) had acquired great renown. And a Bodhisattva lived then in this country as the sole lord of the land, namely, the glorious Nāgārjuna who resided at Ṣaḍarhadvana."[20]

Nothing is clearly known about the religious inclinations of Vāsiṣka from his inscriptions. We have as yet discovered no coins of this king. If, however, his identification with Juṣka of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* is accepted, the king had probably both Vaiṣṇavite and Buddhistic leanings. This is in keeping with the representation of diverse divinities on the reverse of the coins of Kaṇiṣka I and the erection, by the same king, of a *vihāra* or *caitya* at Peshāwar and an Iranian Fire temple at Surkh Kotal. Kalhaṇa's reference to the predominance of the Buddhists in the time of the Turuṣka (Kuṣāṇa) kings may be true, because the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa age witnessed the rise and development of the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism, and it is well known that the growth of a new doctrine or sect is often characterised by great popular enthusiasm. The Buddhist tradition that the Fourth Buddhist Council was held in the Kashmir region under the patronage of king Kaṇiṣka cannot be dissociated from the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* tradition regarding the influence of the Buddhists in the area.

Like the coins of Kaṇiṣka, the reverse of Huviṣka's coins also exhibits a variety of divinities— (1) Athsho (Greek *Hepahistos* and Indian *Viśvakarman*), (2) the goddess of abundance Ardoksho, (3) the Moon-god Monaobago or Mao,

20 Stein, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31. The tradition that the Kuṣāṇa kings flourished 150 years after the Buddha's death, (i.e. in the latter half of the fourth century B. C.,) is of course wrong by several centuries.

(4) the Sun-god Helios, Anio, Miiro or Mioro, (5) the goddess Nanashao, (6) the goddess Oanao or Oaninda, (7) the god Oesha (Vṛṣa, i. e. Śiva), (8) the war-god Shaoreoro (Persian *Shahrewar*, Greek *Ares*), (9) Herakles, (10) the fire-god Pharro (Persian *Farr*), (11) the four-armed god Ooshna (Viṣṇu), (12) Gaṇeśa (Śiva), (13) Ommo (Umā), (14) Skando-Komaro (Skanda-Kumāra, (15) Bizago (Viśākha), (16) Maasena (Mahāsena), (17) Nana and Oesho together, (18) Rom, (19) Oron, (20) Sarapho, (21) Lrooaspo (22) Oakhsho, (23) Araikhsho, etc.[21] This shows that, like Kaṇiṣka, Huviṣka also had leanings towards most of the religious faiths prevalent among the peoples of his vast empire.

A Mathurā inscription,[22] however, speaks of the *vihāra* of *Mahārāja Rājatirāja Devaputra* Huviṣka. Another Mathurā inscription[23] of Huviṣka's reign (year 51) mentions the *Mahārāja-Devaputra-vihāra* which may be the same monastery. A person installed the relics of the Buddha in a *vihāra* about 30 miles to the west of Kabul with the idea that the principal share of his religious merit would go to *Mahārāja Rājatirāja* Huviṣka.[24] This is, of course, of no special significance, because another Mathurā inscription,[25] recording the creation of a permanent endowment for running a *puṇya-śālā* for catering free food to one hundred Brāhmaṇas per month, says that the religious merit accruing to the pious act would go to *Devaputra Ṣāhi* Huviṣka and to those

21 *Sel. Ins.*, 1965 ed., p. 160, note 6; Whitehead, *op. cit.*, pp. 194 ff. J. N. Banerjea traced the Hari-Hara form combining Śiva and Viṣṇu on a coin of Huviṣka (*Development of Hindu Iconography*, 2nd ed., pp. 123-24).

22 Lüders, *Mathura Inscriptions*, p. 68, No. 62.

23 *Sel. Ins.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-58.

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 151 ff. Another Mathurā ins[...] pp. 138 ff.) refers to some pious activity for inc[...] strength of *Mahārāja Rājatirāja Devaputra* Huviṣ[...] of the work cannot be determined owing to the d[...] epigraph.

who loved him. This suggests that Huviṣka's relations with the Brāhmaṇists were quite cordial.

Cunningham noticed a nicolo seal of a Kuṣāṇa ruler whom he identified with Huviṣka on account of the similarity of the head-dress and garment.[26] He says about the device, "a Kuṣāṇa chief standing in a respectful pose with folded hands before the four-armed god Viṣṇu; the god carries in his four hands a wheel (shown exactly like a cart-wheel), a mace, a ring-like object and a globular thing; there is an inscription in illegible characters by the side of the god" The inscription, written in the Tocharian language and a cursive modification of the Greek script, has been deciphered by Ghirshman as containing the names of the gods Mihira (the Iranian Sun-god), Viṣṇu and Śiva.[27]

The Kuṣāna king Vāsudeva bears the Vaiṣṇavite name of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa; but the reverse of some of his coins bears the representation of the goddesses, Nana and Ordoksho, though the Indian god Śiva (Oesho) is found on a large number of them.[28] There is no evidence of Vāsudēva's Buddhist leanings.

The evidence at our disposal, would thus show that Kadphises I may have been a Buddhist or a Śaiva and Kaniṣka I (or II) and Huviṣka may have had leanings towards Buddhism as well as to some other religious faiths; but Kadphises II was a devotee of Śiva, and nothing is known about the Buddhist leanings of Vāsudēva, while Vāsiṣka may have had both Vaiṣṇava and Buddhist leanings as we have seen. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to think that the Kuṣāṇa kings were all

26 See *Num. Chron.*, 1893, pp. 126-27, Pl. X, fig. 2; cf. J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

27 *Les Chionites Hepthalites*, pp. 55-58, fig. 55; Pl. VII. 1. Ghirshman takes the devotee to be a Hūṇa chief, though the seal appears to be earlier than the advent of the Hūṇas in India.

28 Whitehead, *op. cit.*, pp. 208 ff.

staunch followers of Buddhism. It is equally difficult to attribute, to Kuṣāṇa inspiration, most pre-Muslim Buddhist establishments discovered in or in the neighbourhood of the territory ruled by the Kuṣāṇas from the foundation of the house by Kadphises I in the first half of the first century A. D. down to the time of Ardashīr Babagan (226-41 A. D.), the founder of the Sassanian dynasty of Iran, who subjugated the Kuṣāṇa king. It appears that the Kuṣāṇas followed a catholic religious policy and patronised different faiths, even though they may have had special leanings towards particular creeds like Buddhism. There can be little doubt that the Buddhist subjects of the Kuṣāṇa emperors were responsible for most of the Buddhist religious establishments raised during their age in different parts of their empire.

It may be argued that Kaṇiṣka's catholic religious policy turned into a staunch devotion to Buddhism later in his old age, and attention may be drawn to the case of king Harṣavardhana Śīlāditya (606-47 A.D.) of Kanauj, who is represented as a *Paramamāheśvara* (devout worshipper of Maheśvara or Śiva) in his inscriptions[29] dated 627 and 639 A D., though the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang, who travelled in India from 629 to 643 A.D., speaks of the said king's staunch devotion to the Buddha.[30] Although this may not be improbable, we cannot possibly ignore the case of the great Mughul emperor Akbar (1556-1605 A.D.) whose "conduct at different times justified Christians, Hindus, Jains and Parsees in severally claiming him as one of themselves."[31]

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29 *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, pp. 72 ff.; Vol. IV, pp. 210 ff.

30 See Watters, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 344, 364, etc.

31 Smith, *Oxford History of India*, Part II, 1920, p. 360.

II

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE NORTH-WEST UNDER FOREIGN OCCUPATION

As indicated by the *Manusmṛti*[1] and the geographical sections in the Purāṇas[2], the name Udīcya or Uttarāpatha was applied, in the early centuries of the Christian era, to the land beyond the Eastern Punjab, extending as far as the Oxus valley and originally also including the Himalayan region. The Brāhmaṇas of this land are mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[3] as engaged, under the leadership of Svaidāyana Śaunaka, in a dispute with the Kuru-Pañcāla Brāhmaṇa Uddālaka Āruṇi and as defeating the latter. According to the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*,[4] the speech of the Udīcyas, i. e. the people of Udīcya, which was similar to that of the Kuru-Pañcālas, was celebrated for its purity and, therefore, the Brāhmaṇas of other parts of the country used to go to Udīcya for purposes of study. This has to be read with the evidence of the Buddhist literature, according to which, the city of Takṣaśilā (near modern Rawalpindi in West Pakistan) in the Gandhāra country in Udīcya or Uttarāpatha was a great seat of learning and a famous resort of students of different parts of the country.[5]

The Jātaka stories represent Takṣaśilā as a famous university of pre-Buddhistic times. In the Buddha's days, princes and other eminent men received their training at the place. King

1 II. 21; cf. Sircar, *Cosm. Geog. E. Ind. Lit.*, p. 17.

2 See Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 23 ff., for a list of the Udīcya peoples.

3 XI. 4.1.1; cf. *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, I. 3.6.

4 VII. 6.

5 Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, pp. 8, 28, 203.

Prasenajit of Kosala, the Licchavi chief, Mahāli, and the Malla prince, Bandhula, are said to have been classmates at Takṣaśilā, to which students also flocked from countries like Lāṭa, Kuru-deśa, Magadha, Śivi-deśa, etc. Among the Takṣaśilā students, mention may also be made of Jīvaka of Magadha, Aṅgulimāla of Kosala, Dharmapāla of Avanti and Yaśodatta of the Malla country. The three Vedas and the eighteen *vidyās* were taught at Takṣaśilā, the sciences (*vidyās*) including archery, swordsmanship, elephant-craft (*hasti-śāstra*), magic (*e. g. ālambana-mantra* for charming snakes and *nidhyuddharaṇa-mantra* for recovering buried treasure), etc. The students also learnt the science of rituals (*mantra*), though, in this subject, Vārāṇasī probably had a greater reputation, at least at one stage, because students are said to have gone from Takṣaśilā to Vārāṇasī for learning the *mantras*.[6]

Some Udīcya peoples, however, may have been regarded as of bad repute even in the early age. The *Atharvaveda* mentions certain distant peoples to whom fever had to be banished.[7] Here the following groups are referred to : (1) Mūjavat, Mahāvṛṣa and Balhika; (2) Mūjavat and Balhika; (3) Mahāvṛṣa and Mūjavat; and (4) Gandhāri, Mūjavat, Aṅga and Magadha. Of these, according to later evidence, the Balhikas lived in Northern Afghanistan, the Gandhāris (Gandhāras) in the Rawalpindi and Peshawar Districts of West Pakistan, the Aṅgas in East Bihar and the Magadhas in South Bihar. Most scholars think that, of the Gandhāri, Mūjavat, Aṅga and Magadha mentioned in the same breath, "the latter two tribes are apparently the eastern limit of

6 For references, see Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, Vol. I, p. 982.

7 V. 22.5, 7, 8 and 14; cf. *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*, II.5.

the poet's knowledge, the two former, the northern".[8] But the Magadhas are mentioned in the Vedic literature generally as a people of little repute, and the Māgadha (a man from the land of Magadha) is included in the list of victims of the Puruṣamedha sacrifice.[9] It is thus not altogether impossible that the other three peoples, mentioned along with them, had also an amount of disrepute attached to their names, though it is difficult to be satisfied on this point, especially in view of the evidence of the Buddhist literature.[10]

Besides what has been said above about the learned Brāhmaṇas of Takṣaśilā, it has to be noticed that the prestige of the Udīcya Brāhmaṇas is generally recognised in the Pāli literature. Thus Fick says, "of one of the Brāhmaṇas, hitherto described and conforming to the Brahmanical ideal, it is said with emphasis that he belongs to the North, or is of Northern extraction, i. e. is an Udicca (Udīcya) Brāhmaṇa."[11] Reference is made to the great social prestige attached to the Udīcya Brāhmaṇas settled in Kāśī and Magadha. This must, however, be regarded as the echo of an earlier age, because the Pāli Buddhist works were really composed considerably after the days of the Buddha, in the sixth and fifth centuries B. C., when

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8 *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p. 219, note 2. Bloomfield, however, thinks that the name Mahāvṛṣa has been chosen for its sound and sense (as 'of mighty strength' to resist the disease) than for its geographical position (*Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, p. 446).

9 *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*, XXX. 5. 22; *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, III. 4.1.1.

10 Whereas there is reference to "a bad Brāhmaṇa living in Magadha", we have also rarely mention of respectable Brāhmaṇas living in the country. See *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 116.

11 *The Social Organisation in North-East India*, trans. S. K. Maitra, pp. 212-13. Fick locates Udīcya in the Kuru-Pañcāla region immediately to the west and north-west of the Kāśī-Magadha areas. But the geographical name Udīcya can hardly be interpreted in that way. The migration of the Udīcya Brāhmaṇas to the Kāśī-Magadha territory may have been due to the foreign occupation of Uttarāpatha to which we are referring below.

Uttarāpatha had already been tasting foreign occupation and was gradually being regarded as an impure land.

The foreign occupation of parts of Udīcya or Uttarāpatha began at least as early as the middle of the sixth century B. C. when the Achaemenian emperor Cyrus (558-530 B. C.), conquered Afghanistan and the land of certain tribes, lying to the west of the Indus in the valley of the Kabul river.[12] The territories of Gandhāra[13] and Sindhu (the Punjab region), on both banks of the Indus, were included in the Achaemenian empire during the early years of the reign of Darius I (522-486 B.C.). The empire of the Achaemenians passed to the Macedonian monarch, Alexander the great, who defeated and killed Darius III (335-330 B. C.) and conquered wide areas of the Punjab and Sind. Alexander left the region in 324 B.C., after having founded a number of cities garrisoned by Greek troops in the occupied parts of India; but they were subjugated by Candragupta Maurya (c. 324-300 B.C.), to whom Alexander's general Seleucus, after having probably been defeated at the hands of the Maurya a few years after he had consolidated his position in Western Asia and made Babylon his capital in 311 B.C., surrendered the four territories of Aria (Herat), Arachosia (Kandahar), Paropamisadae (Kabul) and Gedrosia (Baluchistan) in exchange for 500 elephants. The story seems to be supported by the fact that receently some

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12 According to Arrian, "the district west of the river Indus as far as the river Cophen (Kabul) is inhabited by the Astacenians (of the Puṣkalāvatī or Charsada area sometimes regarded as Western Gandhāra) and Assacenians (of Swat and Buner), Indian tribes. These were in ancient times subject to the Assyrians, afterwards to the Medes, and finally they submitted to the Persians and paid tribute to Cyrus, the son of Cambyses, as ruler of their land." See Chinnock, *Arrian's Anabasis*, p. 339.

13. According to the *Rāmāyaṇa* (VII. 113. 11; 114. 11), Gandhāra lay on both sides of the Indus and had Takṣaśilā and Puṣkalāvatī as capital cities.

inscriptions of Aśoka were discovered at a place near old Kandahar in Afghanistan.[14]

The Mauryas ruled over West Pakistan and Afghanistan (excluding Bactria in Northern Afghanistan) for nearly a century. But, thereafter, Afghanistan and West Pakistan were ruled by the Bactrian Greeks (Yavana), Scythians (Śaka), Parthians (Pahlava), Kuṣāṇas, Hūṇas, Turks, etc., till the early medieval period. This foreign contact, lasting for several centuries, considerably modified the culture and social prestige of Uttarāpatha.

That some of the foreign settlers of Uttarāpatha had social systems different from those of the rest of India is indicated by the *Majjhimanikāya*[15] and the inscriptions of Aśoka. The former speaks of the land of the Yavanas (Greeks of Uttarāpatha) and Kambojas (Iranian settlers of Uttarāpatha) as having two classes of peoples, e.g., Ārya (Patrician) and Dāsa (Plebian); that is to say, the population in those countries was not divided into the four social grades, viz. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra.[16] The same thing is said about the Yavanas in the Aśokan inscriptions,[17] according to which there were no Brāhmaṇas and Śramaṇas in the Yavana land as there were in the other parts of the Maurya empire. Another interesting fact is that, in the inscriptions[18] of Aśoka, mention is made of the Gandhāras along with the Yavanas and Kambojas. It has to be noticed that while, on the one hand, the foreign settlers were regarded, by Manu and other authorities, as a part of the Indian

14 Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. I, 1965 ed., pp. 527-28; *Journ. As.*, 1964, pp. 137 ff. See also *Ep. Ind*, Vol. XXXIV, PP. 1 ff; Vol. XXXVII, PP. 163 ff.; *Foreigners in Ancient India and Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī in Art and Literature*, ed. Sircar, D. C. PP. 25 ff.

15 P. T. S. ed., Vol. II, p. 149.

16 The *Bhūridatta Jātaka* (No. 543), which may be assigned to the early centuries of the Christian era, suggests that only an ignoble custom suits the Kamboja people.

17 Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. I, 1965 ed., p. 35 and note 8.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 22 (R. E. V); cf. Yavana-Kamboja (p. 36, R. E. XIII).

social organisation, on the other, differences of their appearances, etc., were often emphasised. Thus, the Yavanas were represented in Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*[19] as 'pure Śūdra', and in Gautama's *Dharmasūtra*[20] as sprung from the union of the Kṣatriya male and Śūdra female, while the *Manusmṛti*[21] mentions them in the list of degraded Kṣatriyas. At the same time, a well-known story in the *Harivaṁśa*[22] and the Purāṇas represents the Yavanas as distinct, even among the foreigners settled in India, because they had a fully shaven head like the Kambojas, while the Śakas, it is said, shaved only half of their head.[23]

Another effect of the foreign occupation of Uttarāpatha was that the people of the other parts of India began to regard the said region as an unholy land inhabited by irreligious peoples. This appears to be due to the admixure of blood between the Indians and the foreigners that must have occurred in Uttarāpatha, and also to the general popularity of Buddhism among many of the foreign settlers.

According to Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*,[24] contemptuous expressions, such as 'He is a bad Brāhmaṇa', should be punished by fines, and the same rules should apply to calumnies in respect of learning, of the professions of baffoons, artisans and

19 On Pāṇini, II. 4.10.

20 IV. 21.

21 X. 42-43.

22 I. 14. 15 ff.; cf. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 88. 139 ff.—
ardhaṁ śakānāṁ śiraso muṇḍaṁ kṛtvā vyasarjayat |
Yavanānāṁ śiraḥ sarvaṁ Kambojānāṁ tath=aiva ca ||
Pāradā mukta-keśāś=ca Pahlavāḥ śmaśru-dhāriṇaḥ, etc.

23 See Sircar, *Stud. Soc. Adm. Anc. Med. Ind.*, Vol. I, pp. 41 ff.

24 Shamasastry's ed., p. 194; trans., pp. 218-19.

musicians, and of nationalities, such as 'He is a Prājjuṇaka',[25] 'He is a Gāndhāra', etc. From this, there is no doubt that the people of Gandhāra were looked upon with contempt[26] in the age to which Kauṭilya's statement has to be referred.[27]

Chapters 44-45 of the Karṇa-parvan of the *Mahābhārata* describe the bad character and customs of the people of the land called Pañcanada ('the country of the Five Rivers') watered by the Indus and its five eastern tributaries, viz the Śatadru, Vipāśā, Irāvatī, Candrabhāgā and Vitastā.[28] The people of the land are mentioned generally as Vāhīka or Āraṭṭa (44.7 and 31-32), though, at one place (44 44), the two names are applied to the people and their country respectively. The Āraṭṭas are once even called a Vāhīka people (44.37). The Jārtikas (modern Jats) are also mentioned as a Vāhīka people (44.10) and likewise, the

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25 The Prājjuṇakas may be the same as the Prārjunas known from the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta (*Select Inscriptions*, 1965 ed., p. 265, text line 22). Shamasastry mentions *Prāṇaka* (probably a mistake for *Prārjunaka*) as a variant reading found in the Munich manuscript. R. G. Basak's Bengali translation recognises *Prāg-Hūṇaka* (the eastern Hūṇas) in its place (Vol. I, p. 245), though the *Arthaśāstra*, even in its present form, cannot be so late as the fifth century A. D. when the Hūṇas entered into India.

26 It is strange indeed that, on the strength of the above passage in the *Arthaśāstra*, Buddha Prakash observes, "Kauṭilya prescribes a fine for a person who slanders or vilifies Gandhāra. No richer encomium could possibly be paid to the Indus region in ancient times" (*Political and Social Movements in Ancient Punjab*, pp. 82-83.)

27 The *Arthaśāstra* may have been composed about the close of the fourth century B. C., but contains later additions, so that the work as we have it now may be assigned to a date about the third century A. D.

28 Cf. *Pañcānāṁ Sindhu-Ṣaṣṭhānāṁ nadīnāṁ ye=ntarā sthitāḥ |*
tān=dharma-bāhyān=aśucīn=Bāhīkān=parivarjayet || (44.7)
pañca-nadyo vahanty=etā yatra pīlūvanāny=uta |
Śatadruś=ca Vipāśā ca tṛtīy=Airāvatī tathā ||
Candrabhāgā Vitastā ca Sindhuṣaṣṭhā bahir=gireḥ |
Āraṭṭā nāma te deśā naṣṭa-dharmā na tān=vrajet || (44.31-32

Gandhāras and Madrakas (45·8). In one case (45·36), the Madras (Madrakas) are distinguished from the Vāhīkas apparently as the worst amongst the latter.[29] In the same context, one stanza (44-46) mentions the Prasthalas, Madras, Gandhāras, Āraṭṭas, Khasas, Vasātis, Sindhus and Sauvīras together. It is said that the Vāhīkas are irreligious and impure and should be avoided (44·7); the habits of the Vāhīkas, called Jārtika, are mentioned as abominable (44·10); one should not stay, it is said, for a moment in the Vāhīka country (44-22); the Āraṭṭa country is likewise irreligious, and one should not visit it (44·32); the Vāhīkas are a people who have lost their religion (44·34); the Vāhīkas, called Āraṭṭa, should be avoided by the learned men (44·37); an Ārya should not live in the land of the Vāhīkas, called Āraṭṭa, even for two days (44·40); the Vāhīkas, who are descendants of the *Piśācas* of the Vipāśā, named Vahi and Hika, are not the creation of Prajāpati and do not know the proper religion (44·41); the religion of Pañcanada is decried by Pitāmaha (45·19 and 21); the Vāhīkas are the dirt of the earth and the Madra women are the dirt of womanhood (45·23); fie upon the Āraṭṭas of Pañcanada (45·29); etc.

Some of the obnoxious habits and customs of the people of Pañcanada may be mentioned here. They used to eat beef with garlic (44·11; cf. 44·26); their women, intoxicated and naked, danced on the road (44.12); these women had little idea about chastity and sang indelicate songs (44·13);[30] the people of Pañcanada used to take away the clothes of the visitors to their country and chased them on the road (44·21); they used to drink

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29 This is according to the *Māṭhara-Kauṇḍinya nyāya; cf. Brāhmaṇā bhojyantām, Māṭhara-Kauṇḍinyau pariveviṣātām* (*IHQ*, Vol. XXII, p. 314, note 21).

30 Cf. also 40.34—

Vāsāṁsy=utsṛjya nṛtyanti striyo vā madya-mohitāḥ |
maithune='saṁyatāś=c=āpi yathā-kāma-varāś=ca tāḥ ||

various kinds of liquor (44·27) and eat the meat of animals including asses and camels (44·28); they used to eat from uncleaned wooden and earthen plates (44·35); they drank the milk of sheep, camels and asses (46·36); they were devoid of the Vedas, sacrifices, etc. (44·45); in Pañcanada, a Brāhmaṇa could be first a Kṣatriya, then a Vaiśya, then a Śūdra, then a barber, then again a Brāhmaṇa, and finally, a slave (45·6·7); the Brāhmaṇas of the Vāhīkas, called Gandhāra and Madraka, had sexual relations with (i. e. married) members of their own families (45·8); in the Āraṭṭa land, one's sister's son and not one's own son inherited one's property (45·13); peoples of the land extending from Matsya to Kuru-Pañcāla and from Naimiṣa to Cedi, i. e. the Kurus, Pañcālas, Śālvas, Matsyas, Naimiṣas, Kosalas, Kāśis, Aṅgas, Kaliṅgas and Magadhas, knew the true religion, but not the wretched Madras and Pañcanadas (45·14-16);[31] just as the Easterners, the Southerners and the Surāṣṭras were respectively slaves, outcastes and mixed breed, the Vāhīkas were thieves (45·28); the nature of the Āraṭṭas of Pañcanada was characterised by ingratitude, robbery, addiction to liquors, incest, abusing others, slaughter of cows, etc. (45.29); the Vāhīkas might be made to understand a thing by beating, but the Madrakas were totally incapable of understanding anything (45.36);[32] etc.

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31 *Kuravaḥ saha Pañcālāḥ Sālvā Matsyāḥ sa-Naim ṣāḥ* |
Kośalāḥ Kāśayo='Ṅgāś=ca Kaliṅgā Māgadhās=tathā ||
Cedayaś=ca mahābhāgā dharmaṁ jānanti śāśvatam | . . .
ā Matsyebhyaḥ Kuru-Pañcāla-deśyā
ā Naimiṣāc=Cedayo ye viśiṣṭāḥ |
dharmaṁ purāṇam=upajīvanti santo
Madrād=ṛte Pañcanadāṁś=ca jihmān ||

32 Cf. *iṅgitajñāś=ca Magadhāḥ prekṣitajñāś=ca Kosalāḥ* |
ardh-oktāḥ Kuru-Pañcālāḥ Sālvāḥ kṛtsn-ānuśāsanāḥ |
Parvatīyāś=ca viṣamā yath=aiva Śivayas=tathā |
sarvajñā Yavanā rājan śūrāś=c=aiva viśeṣataḥ |
Mlecchāḥ sva-saṁjña-niyatā n=ānuktā itare janāḥ |
Pratirathās=tu Vāhīkā na ca kecana Madrakāḥ | (45.34-36)

In the seventh century A.D., the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang says that, from Lampāka (Laghman in Afghanistan) to Rājapura (Rajauri in Kashmir), the people were coarse and plain in personal appearance and had rude and violent disposition, that they spoke vulgar dialects and exhibited scant courtesy and little fairness, and that they did not belong to India proper, but were inferior people of the frontier.[33]

In this connection, it is interesting to note that the land of Kurukṣetra in the Ambala-Karnal region, lying to the east of the Śatadru valley in Pañcanada, was regarded as a particularly holy land in the later Vedic texts,[34] while both the *Manusmṛti*[35] and *Mahābhārata*[36] mention the tract between the Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī rivers in Kurukṣetra as the holiest in the whole country. The *Manusmṛti*[37] calls it Brahmāvarta which was even superior, in holiness, to the holy land of Brahmarṣi-deśa comprising Kurukṣetra, Matsya (Jaipur-Alwar-Bharatpur region), Pañcāla (having its capitals in the Bareiley and Farrukhabad Districts of U. P.) and Śūrasenaka (Mathura region). It is well known that Udīcya or Uttarāpatha was located beyond Pṛthūdaka[38] (Pehoa in the Karnal District), or Vinaśana,[39]

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33 Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, Vol. I, p. 284.

34 See *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p. 163, for references.

35 II. 17-18—*Sarasvatī-Dṛṣadvatyor = deva-nadyor = yad = antaram* |
taṁ deva-nirmitaṁ deśaṁ Brahmāvartaṁ pracakṣate ||
tasmin deśe ya ācāraḥ pāramparya-kram-āgataḥ |
varṇānāṁ sāntarālānāṁ sa sad-ācāra ucyate ||

36 III. 83. 204-05—*dakṣiṇena Sarasvatyā uttareṇa Dṛṣadvatīm* |
ye vasanti Kurukṣetre te vasanti triviṣṭape ||

37 II. 19 The same four peoples are again mentioned in the *Manusmṛti* (VII. 193) as the best soldiers in the country, probably because they had some success in fighting against the foreigners.

38 See Rājaśekhara's *Kāvyamīmāṁsā*, G.O.S. ed., p. 94.

39 Cf. *Manusmṛti*, II. 21.

the latter name literally meaning 'disappearance' and indicating the place where the holy Sarasvatī lost itself in the sands of the desert. This Vinaśana-tīrtha lies in the Sirhind region of the Patiala District. It appears that the holy character of Kurukṣetra did not suffer much down to the early centuries of the Christian era when the *Manusmṛti* and the latter sections of the *Mahābhārata* are supposed to have been composed; but the despised foreigners were not far away. According to the *Mahābhārata*,[40] the Sarasvatī disappeared out of repugnance for the Śūdras and Ābhīras who apparently inhabited the Patiala District. Of the said two tribes, the Ābhīras are usually regarded by scholars to have been foreigners who entered into India in the train of the Śakas.[41]

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40 IX. 37. 1—*Śūdr-Ābhīran prati dveṣād=yatra naṣṭā Sarasvatī.*

41 D. R. Bhandarkar, *Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population* (Calcutta reprint), pp. 20 ff. Cf. R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, pp. 51 ff; also *The Age of Imperial Unity* (*History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. II), ed. Mujumdar, p. 221.

III

THE OXUS VALLEY AND THE KUSANAS

The Chinese got interesting information about the Yue-chi from Chang K'ien who returned to China from Central Asia in 126 B. C. At that time, the Yue-chi had their capital at Kien-she to the north of the Oxus and had made themselves master of Ta-hia which had its capital at Lan-shi to the south of that river in the present Badakhshan (Afghanistan). As we have seen elsewhere, according to Fan Ye's narration of the events of the period 25-125 A. D., the capital of the Yue-chi was the old Ta-hia capital Lan-shi which remained their stronghold down to the fifth century A. D. "In the period of the *Hou Han-shu*, the Yue-chi had settled down in the old Ta-hia country and now represented the whole Ta-hia empire, i. e., as M. Chavannes puts it, henceforward they are the Ta-hia." This is supposed to have taken place between 126 B. C. and 25 A. D.[1] The suggestion, however, that the entire Yue-chi clan was then settled in the land to the south of the Oxus or that the Yue-chis settled on both banks of the Oxus were called Ta-hia is doubtful.

According to the *Shi-ki*, "Ta-hia is situated more than 2,000 *li* south-west of Ta-wan (Ferghana) and south of the Wei water (Oxus) ... The people have no supreme ruler, but the various towns appoint minor chiefs. The soldiers there are weak and fear warfare; they are skilled in trading and marketting."[2] It is these people who appear to have been subjugated by the Yue-chi.

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1 Sten Konow, *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. II, Part I; p. lip.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. lv-lvi.

According to the *Hou Han-shu*, as we have elsewhere seen, the Yue-chi "transferred themselves to Ta-hia and divided that kingdom into five *hi-hou*, viz. (1) Hiu-mi (capital – Ho-mo), (2) Shuang-mi (capital—Shuang-mi), (3) Kuei-shuang (capital – Hu-tsao), (4) Hi-tun (capital – Po-mao) and (4) Kao-fu (capital—Kao-fu)."[3] This seems to suggest that the entire Yue-chi people settled in Ta-hia to the south of the Oxus. But the *Chien-Han-shu* refers to the conquest of Ta-hia by the Yue-chi and then to the five *hi-hou* and thus seems to suggest that the five principalities originally owed allegiance to the Yue-chi king of Kien-she.[4]

We have referred elsewhere to the locations of the five states as suggested by Marquart : (1) Hiu-mi = Wakhan in North-Western Afghanistan; (2) Shuang-mi = Chitral; (3) Kuei-shuang = between Chitral and the Panjshir valley in Afghanistan; (4) Hi-tun = Parwan on the Panjshir; and (5) Kao-fu = Kabul.[5] Marquart also identified Ta-hia with Tu-ho-lo (Tukhāra) about which the *T'ang-shu* says, "it is to the west of the Tsung-ling (Pamir) and to the south of the river Wu-hu (Oxus). It is the old territory of the Ta-hia."[6] It will be seen that all the five territories lay to the south of the Oxus. In the first half of the first century A. D., K'iu-Tsiu-k'io (Kujula Kadphises or Kadphises I) of the *hi-hou* of Kuei-shuang (Kuṣāṇa) subdued the four other *hi-hou* and became king. "He invaded An-si (Par-thia) and seized the territory of Kao-fu (Kabul). Moreover, he triumphed over Pu-ta (near Kabul) and Ki-pin (Kafiristan and the adjoining eastern

3 *Ibid.*, p. lvi.

4 Cf. Mukherjee, *Stud. Kush. Gen. Chron.*; pp. 7, 122. Kadphises I may have made Lan-shi his capital after having subdued the four *hi-hou* and assumed the title of King.

5 Sten Konow, *loc. cit* A later writer regards Kao-fu to be a mistake for Tu-mi.

6 *Ibid.*, p. lvii; cf. "Fo-ho-lo (Baktra) bordering northwards on the Oxus" (Beal, *Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*, p. 48).

area) and entirely possessed those kingdoms."[7] This description seems to suggest that the founder of the Kuṣāṇa kingdom did not rule over any tract to the north of the Oxus.

The *Hou Han-shu* goes on : "K'iu-tsiu-k'io died when he was more than eighty years old. His son Yen-kao-chen (Wema Kadphises or Kadphises II) became king in his stead. He again conquered Tien-chu and appointed a general there for administration. From this moment the Yue-chi became extremely powerful. In all the kingdoms they were spoken of as king of Kuei-shuang; but the Han stuck to their old designation and called them Ta Yue-chi."[8] It may be noticed that nothing has been said here about the expansion of the Kuṣāṇa kingdom under Kadphises II beyond the Oxus in the north. Tien-chu (Sanskrit *Sindhu*) seems to indicate the Western Punjab or the Sind-Punjab region. The capital of both Kadphises I and Kadphises II may have been at Lan-shi in Badakshan.

The next important Kuṣāṇa king Kaṇiṣka I seems to have been an adventurer like Ikhtiyār-uddīn Muḥammad bin Bakhtiyār Khaljī who conquered wide areas of Bihar and Bengal when Muiz-uddīn Muḥammad bin Sām and his generals were laying the foundation of the Turkish Muslim empire in North India. The earliest inscriptions of Kaṇiṣka, dated in his 3rd regnal year, have been found in different parts of U. P. and he seems to have succeeded gradually in extending his political influence over Western India including Rajasthan, Gujarat and Northern Maharashtra and also over West Pakistan and Afghanistan. Traditions recorded by Hiuen-tsang represent him as a king of Gandhāra having its capital at Puruṣapura (Peshāwar), his power reaching the neighbouring states and his influence extending to distant regions, as we have seen elsewhere. This shows that he

7 Sten Konow, *op. cit.*, p. lxii.

8 *Loc. cit.*

ruled over Gandhāra and other territories, though even kings of distant countries were his subordinate allies. The Surkh Kotal (Northern Afghanistan) inscription of year 31 of the Kaṇiṣka era referring to Kaṇiṣka's temple, suggests the inclusion of Ta-hia in Kaṇiṣka's empire. There is no proof that he ruled over any territory to the north of the Oxus.

"As he kept order by military rule over a wide territory reaching to the east of the T'sung-ling (Pamir), a tributary State of China to the west of the Yellow river, through fear of the king's power, sent him a prince or a few princes as hostage;"[9] "when Kaṇiṣka was reigning, the fear of his name spread to many regions so far even as to the outlying vassals of China to the west of the Yellow river. One of these vassal States being in fear sent a hostage to the court of king Kaṇiṣka, the hostage being apparently a son of the ruler of the State."[10] The above statements of Hiuen-tsang do not show that Kaṇiṣka's dominions included any Trans-Oxus territory.

Kaṇiṣka himself admits, according to a tradition, that he failed to subjugate the peoples of the countries to the north. Before his death, Kaṇiṣka is stated to have said, "I have subjugated three regions; all men have taken refuge with me; the region of the north alone has not come in to make its submission."[11] This seems to go against the possibility of the expansion of Kaṇiṣka's power to the north of the Oxus.

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9 Watters, *op. cit.*, p. 124; Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, *op. cit.*, p. 119 — "Then the tribes who occupy the territory to the west of the river (Yellow river) sent hostages to him." The hostages were kept in 'India' (Indus region) in winter, in Kāpiśa in summer, and in Gandhāra in autumn and spring. It is possible that king Kaṇiṣka also had seasonal residences in those territories.

10 Watters, *op. cit.*, p. 292; Beal, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-208. The winter residence of the hostage or hostages was in Cīnabhukti in the Punjab.

11 *Ind. Ant.*, 1903, p. 388; Smith, *E. Hist. Ind.*, 1924, p. 285.

There is another fact which suggests that Kaṇiṣka's empire extended in the north to the southern edge of the T'sung-ling range or Jagdumbash Pamir, i. e. "the meridional range or ranges which buttress the Pamir on the east and divide it from the Tarim basin."[12] It is stated that, about the year 90 A. D., the Yue-chi king (no doubt Kaṇiṣka I) sent a force of 70,000 horsemen under his general Si, across the T'sung-ling, to attack the Chinese general Pan-chao who had subjugated Khotan, Kashgar, Kucha and Karashahr. "The army of Si probably advanced by the Tashkurghan pass, some fourteen thousand feet high, and was so shattered by its sufferings during the passage of the mountains that, when it emerged into the plain below, either that of Kashgar or Yarkand, it fell an easy prey to Pan-chao and was totally defeated."[13]

That Afghanistan continued to be in the empire of the immediate successors of Kaṇiṣka is suggested by the Wardak (near Kabul) vase inscription of Huviṣka, though no inscriptions of Vāsiṣka, Kaṇiṣka II and Vāsudeva have as yet been discovered in that area. Thus the belief regarding the inclusion of certain Trans-Oxus regions in the empire of the Kuṣāṇas of Kaṇiṣka's house is no better than an unproved guess.

The *Book of the Laws of Countries* of Bardesanes (second half of the second century A. D.) refers to the "Bactrians who are called Qushiani (i. e. Kuṣāṇa)."[14] This Bactria, the territory of the Kuṣāṇas, is described by Ptolemy (middle of the same century) as follows : "Bactriane (Bactria) is bounded on the west by Margiane (Merv) along the side already described; on the north and east by Sogdiane, along the rest of the course of the river Oxus; and on the south by the rest of Areia (Herat)

12 Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, p. 27.

13 Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

14 B. N. Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

extending from the extreme point towards Margiane—the position of which is 109° - 39° and by the Paropanisadai (region of the Hindukush) along the parallel thence prolonged, through where the range of Paropanisus diverges towards the sources of the Oxus which lie in 119° 30′ - 39°."[15] The above description of the boundaries of Bactria does not include any part of the Trans-Oxus territory in it.

It is generally assumed by historians that, after the death of the Kuṣāṇa king Vāsudeva (whose latest date is year 98 of the Kaṇiṣka era probably corresponding to 176 A. D.), the Indian empire of the Kuṣāṇas fell into decay. But the *Wei-lio* says that, during the time of the three kingdoms (221-77 A. D., but referring to the period before 239 A. D.), "Ki-pin, Ta-hia, Kao-fu and Tien-chu were all subject to the Great Yue-chi."[16] Since Tien-chu seems to mean the Indus region, the statement probably suggests that, about the first half of the third century A. D., the Kuṣāṇa empire was confined to West Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the 3rd and 4th centuries A. D., the Kuṣāṇas became vassals of the Sassanians of Iran. On some coins of the Sassanian king Hormazd II (301-10 A. D.), he assumes the title *Kuṣān Malkā* (King of the Kuṣāṇas) or *Kuṣān Malkān Malkā* (King of the Kuṣāṇa kings.)[17] This has to be read along with the tradition that Ardashīr I (226-41 A. D.) conquered Balkh, Khurasan and Kabul and advanced as far as Sirhind in Patiala beyond the Satlaj.[18] Certain coins of the Sassanian type and

15 *Mc. Crindle's Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, ed. Mujamdar-Sastri, p. 267.

16 *Toung Pao*, Serie II, Tome IV, Leide, 1905, pp. 538-39.

17 Paruck, *Sassanian coins*, pp. 89, 281-82. Coins with similar titles are attributed to most of the Sassanian kings (Chatterjee, *The Age of the Kuṣāṇas*, pp. 111 ff.).

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 79-81. Ardashīr is generally believed to have established his supremacy over Bactria (MacGovern, *The Early Empires of Central Asia*, p 401; Sykes, *History of Persia*, Vol. I, p 394).

fabric, bearing legends in the Nāgarī (really, late Brāhmī), Pahlavī and modified Greek alphabets are attributed to Sassanian rulers flourishing in the Indus valley.[19]

The Naqsh-i-Rustam inscription of Shāpūr I is supposed by some scholars to have been drafted in 262 A. D., while others think that it was finally revised at a later date. The epigraph speaks of Sassanian occupation of the Kuṣāṇa territory (called Kwshnhshtr = Kushānshahr and, in Greek, Kouseneon ethnos) which is said to have been bounded by Mrgw (Merv), Hryw (Herat), Skstn (Sakstan, Seistan), Twarn (located in Baluchistan), Mkwrn (Makran near Baluchistan) and P'rtn (located in Baluchistan), Hndstn ('India', i. e. the valley of the Indus) Pshkbwr or Paskibouron (identified with Peshawar) and the frontiers of K'sh (identified with Kashgarh), Swgd (Sogdiana) and Sh'sh st'n. (identified with Tashkent).[20] In our opinion, even if these boundaries of the Kuṣāṇa empire in the second half of the third century A. D. are accepted, they do not suggest the inclusion of any part of the Trans-Oxus country within the Kuṣāṇa territory.

According to the Chinese annals, during the reign of the Wai dynasty (386-556 A. D.), about 430 A. D., Ki-to-lo (Kidāra), a prince of the Great Yue-chi clan, separated himself from the main body and established the little Yue-chi kingdom to the south of

19 Paruck, *op. cit.*, pp. 98, 270-71; Rapson, *Indian Coins*, p, 30. See also B. Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 107 ff.

20 B. N. Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 86, 89; cf. Mariq and Honigmann, *Recherches surles Res Gestae Divi Saporis*, 1953, pp. 11, 94 f.; *BSOAS*, Vol. IX, p. 854; *American Journal of Semitic Language and Literature*, 1940, p. 407.

the Hindukush with Po-lu-sha (Peshawar) as his capital.[21] The cause of this revolution appears to be the continued domination of the Oxus valley by the Sassanians and the settlement in the Trans-Oxus country, by the Huns who troubled the Sassanians from c. 420 to 557 A. D. In the struggle with the Huns, the Sassanian king Fīrūz I [459-84 A. D.][22] lost his life.

About 455 A. D., the Huns invaded the Gupta empire in India, but were driven out by Skandagupta (455-67 A. D.).[23] But even about the beginning of the fifth century A. D., Kālidāsa, in his *Raghuvaṁśa* [IV. 67] locates the Hūṇas on the bank of the Vaṁkṣu [Oxus].

The capital of the Huns, probably at Herat in Afghanistan, was visited by the Chinese pilgrim Song-Yun in 519 A. D. and he says that the Huns received tribute from forty neighbouring countries.[24] In 520 A. D., Song-Yun visited Kan-to-lo (Gandhāra) which was then under a Hun chief.[25] We know that the Hūṇa kings Toramāna and Mihirakula ruled over the whole tract from Kashmir in the north to Malwa in the south about the first quarter of the sixth century A. D.[26] After the defeat of Mihirakula at the hands of Yaśodharman of Mandasor and Bālāditya of the Gupta dynasty of Magadha, the Hūṇa king's

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21 Alfred Von Gutschmid, *Shahis von Kabul*, p. 196. The Paikuli inscription is said to speak of the Kushān Shāh, the kings of Surāṣṭra and Avanti and twelve Śaka kings of the interior who had been to Ctesiphon to swear allegiance to Narses (293-303 A. D.). Cf. *JNSI*, Vol. I, p. 63; Vol. V, p. 41.

22 Paruck, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

23 *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. I, 1965 ed., pp. 323-24 (Bhitari pillar inscription, verse 8).

24 Smith, *E., Hist. Ind.*, p 335.

25 *BEFEO*, 1903, pp. 416-417.

26 Cf. *Select Inscriptions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 470 ff; Stein, *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī*, Vol. I, pp. 78-79, 82-83.

dominions were confined to the Kashmir region.[27] The Hun kingdom in Afghanistan was destroyed by a combined onslaught of the Sassanian king Khusrū I Anoshirvan (531–79 A. D.) and the Turks who had displaced the Huns from the Trans-Oxus territory and settled there. The Sassanian kings Bahram V (590-91 A. D.) and Bistam (592-96 A. D.) sought refuge with the Turks and lost their lives amongst them.[28] About 630 A. D., Hiuen-tsang found the whole region from Turfan to Merv and from Lake Issykkul to the Hindukush under the control of the Khan of the Western Turks.

The above discussion will show that the Kuṣāṇa monarchs from Kadphises I to Vāsudeva I, who flourished in the first and second centuries A. D., ruled over more or less extensive dominions, but that their successors became vassals, first of the Sassanians in the first half of the 3rd century A. D., then of the Huns from the first half of the fifth century A. D. and finally of the Turks from about the latter half of the sixth century A. D.[29] Small chiefs of Kuṣāṇa extraction may have been flourishing in various parts of Afghanistan and West Pakistan and the neighbouring areas;[30] but their contribution to the culture of the region concerned must be regarded as negligible. Even if the ruler of the kingdom of Kāpiśa or Kafiristan, called a Kṣatriya by Hiuen-tsang, was a scion of the Kuṣāṇa clan, he also had nothing to do with the territories to the north of the Oxus.

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27 *Select Inscriptions*, *op. cit.*, p. 419 (Mandasor inscription of Yaśodharman, verse 6); also Watters, *op cit.*, pp. 288 ff.

28 Paruck, *op. cit.*, pp. 108, 112-13.

29 Cf. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 289 ff., 333 ff.; H. C. Ray, *Dyn. Hist. N. Ind.*, Vol. I, pp. 56 ff.

30 Cf. Chavannes speaking of Badakshan remaining a Yue-chi stronghold as late as the fifth century A. D. (*T'oung Pao*, II, viii. p. 187).

We have reports regarding the discovery of Kuṣāṇa coins in the southern part of the Central Asian Republics of the USSR lying to the north of the Oxus. Coins, however, are often seen to have travelled far away from their land of issue for various reasons, and that is why Eastern India is not definitely included in the Kuṣāṇa empire by scholars, even though many hundreds of the Kuṣāṇa copper coins have been found in that region.[31] The discovery of a hoard of Kuṣāṇa gold coins at Dabra Dammo in Abyssinia,[32] apparently indicates trade relations between India and Abyssinia in the early centuries of the Christian era and certainly not the inclusion of parts of Africa in the Kuṣāṇa empire.

The discovery of Kuṣāṇa coins in the Trans-Oxus regions and in Eastern India apparently has similar implications. In the east, the inscriptions of Kaṇiṣka I have been discovered in Uttar Pradesh at Set-Mahet (on the borders between the Gonda and Bahraich Districts), Kosam (Allahabad District) and Sarnath (Varanasi District.)[33] As regards Kaṇiṣka's relations with Bihar, there is a tradition; according to this, Kaṇiṣka advanced against Soked (Sāketa near Ayodhyā, Faizabad District, U. P.) and Pāṭaliputra (near Patna, Bihar) in Eastern India and took away the Buddhist scholar and poet Aśvaghoṣa from Pāṭaliputra.[34] The king of that city, who was the suzerain of Eastern

31 See below.

32 Cf. Sircar, *Studies in Indian Coins*, Delhi, 1968, p. 347.

33 *Select Inscriptions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 135 f., 144 ff.

34 H. C. Raychaudhuri, *Pol. Hist. Anc. Ind.*, 1938 ed., p. 395. According to the Chinese translation of Kumāralāta's *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā*, composed shortly after the reign of Kaṇiṣka, "In the family of the Kiu-sha (Kuṣāṇa), there was a king called Chen-t'an Kia-ni-ch'a (Candana or Candra Kaṇiṣka). He conquered Tung-T'ien-chu and pacified the country. His power spread fear; his good fortune was complete. He set out to return to his kingdom. The route passed through a broad, flat land". Tung T'ien-chu is regarded by some scholars as a part of Eastern India (Sten Konow, *op. cit.*, p. lxxv.)

India, being defeated by the Yue-chi, offered to pay 9 lakh pieces of gold; but he was unable to collect the huge sum and gave, instead, the Buddha's alms-bowl and also Aśvaghoṣa and a miraculous cock.[35]

The Early Licchavis of Nepal used a reckoning which is now supposed to be identical with the Kaṇiṣka or Śaka era of 78 A. D.[36] The use of the era in Bihar has been supposed to be indicated by the recently published Kailvan inscription[37] dated in the year 108. Some coins issued by the Kuṣāṇas have also been discovered in Bihar and the neighbouring regions.[38] The question is therefore whether Bihar and its neighbourhood formed a part of Kaṇiṣka's empire. Scholars are not unanimous on this point, one group regarding it possible and another group doubting the possibility.[39]

Those scholars who doubt the possibility of Bihar's inclusion in Kaṇiṣka's empire may argue that the possible spread of Kaṇiṣka's era in Bihar and Nepal does not presuppose the spread of Kuṣāṇa rule in those territories. The use of the Scytho-Parthian era of 58 B. C. of East Iran (later called Vikrama-saṁvat or the era of king Vikramāditya) seems to have been carried to the Indus valley by the Scythians and Parthians, from there to Rajasthan by the Mālavas, and from there to Uttar Pradesh by the Maukharis;[40] the use of the Kaṇiṣka era, in the same way, may have been carried to Bihar by the Mitras of Ahicchatra or Kauśāmbī. A branch of the Mitras, which

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35 See *Comp. Hist. Ind.*, Vol. II, ed. Sastri. p. 237; cf. *Journ. As.*, 1936, pp. 61-121. As we have seen, the Chinese annalysts say that Kaṇiṣka subdued the east, south and west, but that the north remained unconquered.

36 *Select Inscriptions, op. cit.*, p. 378, note 1.

37 *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 229 ff.

38 See below.

39 Cf. *Journ. Anc. Ind. Hist.*, Vol. I, p. 43.

40 See Sircar, *Ind. Ep.*, pp 242 ff, 251 ff.

probably migrated to the east, is known to historians as the Mitras of Bihar.[41] The Licchavis of Bihar likewise might have carried the use of the era of Kaṇiṣka to their new home in Nepal. So far as the discovery of Kuṣāṇa coins in Bihar is concerned, it may be argued that coins travel and may therefore be carried from one area to another by traders, soldiers, pilgrims, plunderers and others and attention may be drawn to the discovery of the coins of the Śaka Satraps of Western India far away in the Akola, Amaravati, Yeotmal and Wardha Districts of Maharashtra, the Seoni and Chhindwara Districts of Madhya Pradesh and the Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh.[42] It should, however, also be remembered that the coins of the Kuṣāṇas have been found not only in Bihar, but also in Bengal and Orissa. We should not, therefore, speak of the inclusion of Bihar alone in the dominions of Kaṇiṣka or of the Kuṣāṇas, but probably of Eastern India comprising Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. This makes the problem relating to the discovery of Kuṣāṇa coins in Eastern India a subject of careful examination.

Sometimes it is argued that copper is a cheap metal and therefore copper coins did not usually travel far away from their place of issue. If we accept this view, the discovery of Kuṣāṇa copper coins in Eastern India would then prove the inclusion of the said region in the Kuṣāṇa empire. Copper coins are, however, known to have been the principal currency of some kingdoms of ancient India and the copper money had no doubt very considerable purchasing power in early times. Thus the migration of copper coins from one territory to another even in the course of trade is probable.

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of *Imperial Unity*, pp. 172, 174, 214.

. *Studies in Indology*, Vol. IV, p. 233; also Sircar,
, pp. 150 ff

PLATE I



1. Birth of Gautama



2. The Buddha, preaching

PLATE II



1. Kaṇiṣka Casket, Shāh—jī—ki—Ḍhērī
(Calcutta Museum



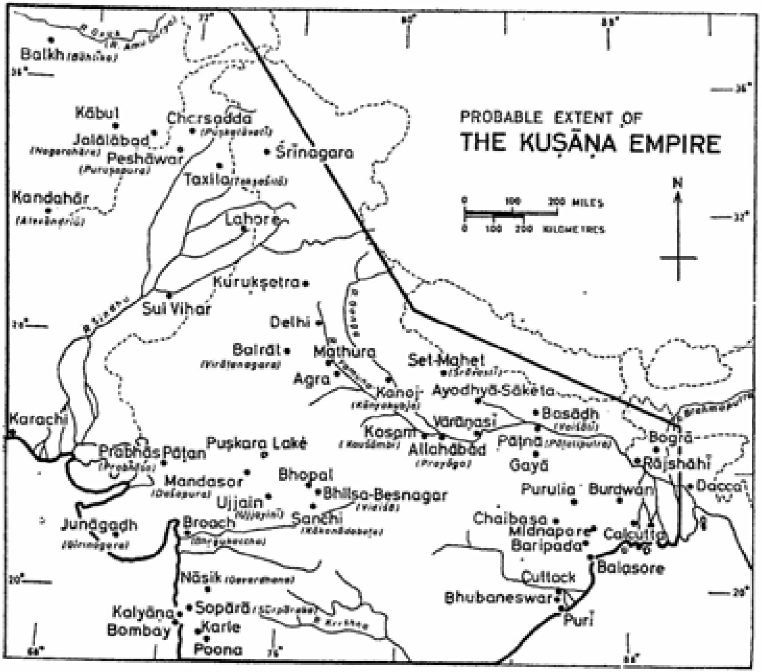
2. Statue of Kaṇiṣka
(Māṭ, Mathurā District)

PLATE III



Kuṣāṇa Coins

PLATE IV


PROBABLE EXTENT OF
THE KUṢĀṆA EMPIRE
0 100 200 MILES
0 100 200 KILOMETRES
N
Balkh
Kābul
Charsadda
Jalālābad
Peshāwar
Śrīnagara
Taxila
Kandahār
Lahore
Kurukṣetra
Sui Vihar
Delhi
Bairāt
Mathura
Agra
Set-Mahet
Kanoj
Ayodhyā-Sāketa
Karachi
Vārāṇasī
Basādh
Kosam
Allahābād
Pāṭnā
Gayā
Prabhās Pāṭan
Puṣkara Lake
Mandasor
Bhopal
Bhilsa-Besnagar
Ujjain
Sānchi
Junāgaḍh
Broach
Bogrā
Rājshāhī
Dacca
Purulia
Burdwān
Chaibasa
Midnapore
Calcutta
Baripada
Balasore
Cuttack
Bhubaneswar
Purī
Nāsik
Kalyāṇa
Sopārā
Bombay
Karle
Poona

In any case, if the discovery of hundreds of Kuṣāṇa coins in Eastern India is not regarded by historians as a definite proof of Kuṣāṇa occupation of the said region, the discovery of Kuṣāṇa money in the Trans-Oxus areas can scarcely be taken to prove any thing of the kind.

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NOTE:— The following abbreviations have been used here:

au.-author, *ca.*-capital, *ch.*-chief, *co.*-country, *di.*-deity, *di.*-district, *dy.*-dynasty, *f.*-family, *gen.*-general *k.*-king, *mo.*-mountain, *n.*-name, *pl.*-place, *pr.*-prince, *re.*-region, *ri.*-river, *s. a.*-same as, *st.*-state, *tit.*-title, *wk.*-work.

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